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CONVERSATION WITH DR. FERNANDO PENABAZ, 8551 SW 24th STREET, MIAMI (33134) FLORIDA

24th ST.

33134

May 30, 1968

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Penabaz is currently a publisher ("Insight on the News", Circulation 17,000)with strong anti-Communist and right wing predilections and connections. He was a lawyer in Cuba (?) until 1962 when he came to the U. S. Dr. Penabaz speaks perfect English and seems to avoid "taking sides" in all of the Cuban groups, tho he is most familiar with a number of former Batista people. Penabaz was never pro-Castro. He was a TV personality in Cuba until he left. He goes on lecture circuit in the US now.

Penabaz believes that there was (1) more than a single assassin and (2) the assassination is intimately connected with Cuba.

Penabaz says that the murder of Diem (Oct. 1962) and company in South Viet Nam can be directly traced to JFK and the CIA. He says they were"murdered like dogs" and this thinly veiled American capacity for political assassination made a great impression on Fidel and Company.

Shortly after Diem's murder, Radio Havana broadcast a speech of Fidel's ade at the Brazilian Embassy in Havana where Fidel noted the U. S. capacity for political murder and remarked 'it can be done to them as they do to others'.

Sometime thereafter (late 1962 or 1963) a large coffin was carried through the streets of Havana with a sign 'Here lies JFK; the Cuban Revolution killed him'. This scene was wirephotoed to the U. S. but only two newspapers printed it: New Hampshire Union Leader and Richmond News Leader.

Penabaz believes that JFK signed his own death warrant at a speech in Miami's Dupont Plaza on November 18, 1963. He pushed for Manolo Ray to succeed Fidel (this was known as "Fidelism without Fidel".

Penabaz does not think that Fidel personally had any role in the assassination: "too dangerous".

Penabaz also does not believe that the "regular" rank and file anti-Castro's had anything to do with it as, according to him, they had never lost faith in JFK and his intentions to help free Cuba. He cites the April 1962, 1st anniversary of the Bay of Pigs when JFK made speech in Orange Bowl. [However, much happened in meantime, especially summer of 1963].

Penabaz rejects completely the thesis that JFK and Fidel were negotiating any sort of rapprochement. He insists JFK was working hard for Manolo Ray to replace Fidel; possibly could be correct and various "feelers" were just fru-fru.

According to Penabaz, Oswald was a fanatical pro-Castro Communist, despite his disppointments in the USSR; see debate with Carlos Bringuier in New Orleans. He says that Oswald feebly attempted to infiltrate anti-Communist anti-Castro group in New Orleans (see meeting at Bringuier store).

The two most likely explanations for the actual assassination, according to Penabas, are:

1. Oswald and two or three others cooked up the whole scheme on their own; these could have been pro-Castro types in FPCC which had been anti-Kennedy for a long time.

2. Castro agents without Castro's personal knowledge

[Penabaz appears to reject Nagell's thesis that the plotters were dissident anti-Castros who masqueraded as pro-Castros in order to recruit a pro-Castro patsy, i.e., Oswald.]

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In his testimony before the Warren Commission, Penabaz said that he had heard that Castro's Air Force Chief (name??) had landed in Dallas in a Red Cessna on November 22, 1963, to pick up Oswald but that plans got fouled up when Oswald went home to change his clothes [This sounds a bit much]. Penabaz

Says CIA has broken recently with Mrs. Emilio Nune Blanco, Fidel's ex-wife who is still in Miami.

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also says that ______________________, a Latin Communist, who stirred up trouble in Zanzibar and Tanganyika, was behind this gambit. Penabaz also says that the Air Chief's #1 Aide defected about mid-1964 but was killed when his helicopter crashed at Key West.

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Very few Cuban exiles seem to know Sylvia Odio Herrera - something peculiar about this??

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Penabaz thinks that Ruby was the "executioner". He points to the fact that Claude Weltzer and William Kuntsler were two of his lawyers "near the end". [See Rap Brown and other "Communists"].

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Penabaz asks about Robert C. Wiehe, CIA type who flitted in and out of Cuba for years. What happened to him?

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Penabaz also mentioned Frank Fiorini, a soldier of fortune in Miami who would know many of the Bay of Pigs (and possibly BRAVO) types - Not in phone book.

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Also mentioned;

CIA types in Miami in 1963 were Fernando Caveda, Mario Seiglie, and Carlos Telles.

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FPCC was primarily American but one Santos Rush, Cuban, was a member and he got money from Raul ROA to put FPCC ad in New York Times.

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